

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (original) A storage medium for the optical storage and retrieval of information, the storage medium comprising:
 - a substrate (1),
 - an active layer (2, 2', ...) for retention of data,
 - the active layer (2, 2', ...) being provided with a pre-determined pattern (4) of bit positions (14, 14', ...).
2. (original) A storage medium as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the substrate (1) is provided with the pre-determined pattern (4) of bit positions (14, 14', ...).
3. (currently amended) A storage medium as claimed in ~~claim 1~~
~~or 2~~ claim 2, characterized in that the pre-determined pattern (4) comprises a two-dimensional strip of bit positions (14, 14', ...).
4. (currently amended) A storage medium as claimed in ~~claim 1~~
~~or 2~~ claim 2, characterized in that the pre-determined pattern (4) comprises an at least partial quasi-hexagonal or quasi-square pattern.
5. (currently amended) A storage medium as claimed in ~~claim 1~~
~~or 2~~ claim 2, characterized in that the scaled distance d_c^* between centers of the bit positions 14, 14', ... is less than 0.84, preferably less than 0.63.
6. (currently amended) A storage medium as claimed in ~~claim 1~~

~~or 2~~ claim 2, characterized in that the scaled distance d_{a1}^* between the active layer at a first bit position and the active layer at an adjacent bit position is less than 0.42, preferably less than 0.3.

7. (original) A method of manufacturing a storage medium for the optical storage and retrieval of information, the method comprising the following steps:

a substrate (1) is provided with a pre-determined pattern (4) of bit positions (14, 14', ...),

an active layer (2, 2', ...) for retention of data is provided substantially at the location of the bit positions (14, 14', ...).

8. (original) A method of manufacturing a storage medium as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that a pressing tool is employed to generate the pre-determined pattern (4) of bit positions (14, 14', ...).

9. (original) A method of manufacturing a storage medium as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that a two-dimensional strip of bit positions (14, 14', ...) in the form of a spiral is provided on the substrate.

10. (currently amended) A method of manufacturing a storage medium as claimed in ~~claim 7 or 8~~ claim 7, further comprising the step of providing a mirror layer (16) between the substrate and the active layer.

11. (currently amended) A method of manufacturing a storage medium as claimed in ~~claim 7 or 8~~ claim 7, further comprising

the step of providing a thermally insulating layer (17) between the active layer (2, 2', ...) at a first bit position () and the active layer at an adjacent bit position ().

12. (currently amended) A record carrier having information written thereon, characterized in that the information is coded in an active layer (2, 2', ...) provided by a method of manufacturing as claimed in ~~claim 7 or 8~~ claim 7.

13. (original) A record carrier as claimed in claim 12, characterized in that the record carrier is an optical disc.